



# *Ashton Hayes Primary School weekly newsletter*

Welcome to our first newsletter of the 2025/2026 academic year. It has been a fabulous first week back. The children, old and new, have settled in brilliantly. There haven't been too many tears from the children (or staff) and there has been lots of smiles!

This year, I have added a couple of extra sections to the newsletter. The first is what is coming up in Ashton Owls before and after school club and the second is an update about areas in school that we are improving/changing or things we are already doing but you may not be aware of – this week I have included lots of information about homework and reading at home. I hope you find these new sections informative.

We are just currently finalising our yearly planer, that will also include all of our planned trips this year – including residentials -this will allow you to know the costs well in advance and can begin paying over the whole year (our residentials are in the summer term this year). We will share the detailed planner early next week with you all

## **Owls:**

Owl Class have made a brilliant start to the new school year! The children have settled in beautifully and are already adapting well to their new routines. They've been eager to explore their writing and guided reading books, and we're already seeing some fantastic reasoning in maths through their journaling.

This week, the children also wrote letters to their future selves, thinking carefully about their academic goals for the year ahead – a lovely way to set intentions and reflect on what they hope to achieve.

Our history topic, *The Great Fire of London*, has sparked lots of interest, and the class are excited to continue learning more. We've also enjoyed some fun team-building games, helping us build strong relationships from the very start.

It's clear that this is going to be a fantastic year in Owl Class!

## **Peregrines:**

Peregrines class have had a great start to the year! They've jumped straight into setting the tone for a positive and productive classroom by working together to create their class contract and agreeing on how they want to learn and treat each other.

They kicked off their writing by sharing stories about their summer holidays, which were lovely to read and gave the children the opportunity to show they hadn't forgotten the beautiful handwriting they worked so hard on last year.



## *Ashton Hayes Primary School weekly newsletter*

In Art, they've started exploring shading techniques, showing some impressive focus and creativity already. It's also been great to see how well they are already working as a team. There's a strong sense of support and teamwork in the room, and it's clear our class is going to achieve some amazing things together this year! I'm very excited to see how well they all do. Mr Morris.

### **Buzzards:**

What a great first week we have had in Buzzards! It has been so lovely to get to know the newest members of the Buzzard team as well as catching up with those I already know so well. Our new Year 6 bunch are such a brilliant group and I can already tell this year is going to be amazing!

We have been busy this week sharing holiday news, spending time with our friends, settling into our new space, easing ourselves into routine and filling our brand-new pencil cases!

Our English time has been spent writing our class contract as a team and writing Kenning poems all about ourselves. We have used our origami skills to make awesome rolling books to publish our poems and share them with the world (or just our fellow Buzzards for now).

We've also warmed up our Maths brains with some fun games and problem-solving activities that have required strategy, logic and a whole load of resilience.



### **Sparrowhawks:**

Sparrowhawks have made an amazing start to the term. Mrs Cuthbert and Mrs Howe are so proud of the way the children have come back after the holidays and been really helping



## ***Ashton Hayes Primary School weekly newsletter***

each other. We have been exploring ways that we can all be part of a team (likening ourselves to the way bees work together in a hive to make honey!)

We have been settling in and exploring all the activities in our classroom. There has also been lots of opportunities to work in year groups in Maths, Phonics and Spellings.

We have been drawing self-portraits in our art lessons and have produced some amazing results!

We are looking forward to a super busy week next week!

### **Kestrels:**

What an amazing week our new children in Kestrel's have had. They have all settled in to school so much more quickly than we could have hoped for – what an amazing achievement! The children are already making lots of new friends and are showing themselves to be great team workers – helping each other with activities and play. The children have had great fun visiting our forest every morning (this will be part of our routine most days) and exploring all of the amazing space. The children have also had lots of time to explore their new classroom and outdoor space. They have also met their Year 6 buddies, who have been helping them to get to know the school and its routines. We already know that this is going to be an amazing year!

### **School Attendance:**

A new year for our attendance – we did a brilliant job last year, hitting our attendance target of at least 96%. It would be brilliant if we could build on that success and try to hit the dizzying heights of being in the top 10 schools across Cheshire West and Chester – last year we finished in the top third of schools- so room to be even more aspirational!

| Class        | This week's attendance | Cumulative attendance for the year |
|--------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Kestrel      | 99.4%                  | 99.4%                              |
| Sparrowhawk  | 93.55%                 | 93.55%                             |
| Owl          | 96.55%                 | 96.55%                             |
| Peregrine    | 97.54%                 | 97.54%                             |
| Buzzard      | 93.17%                 | 93.17%                             |
| Whole school | 96.01%                 | 96.01%                             |



# ***Ashton Hayes Primary School weekly newsletter***

## **Running Club:**

Running Club makes it return on Tuesday 9th, and it will be great to see some new faces!  
Open to Y2-6 and booking is available on ParentPay



## **Ashton Owls:**

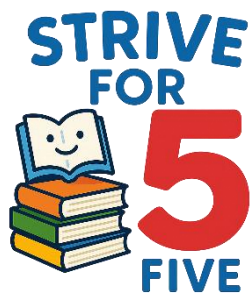
### **Next week.**

| Day       | Sport              | Craft                        |
|-----------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Monday    | Multi-sports       | Sewing                       |
| Tuesday   | Football Club      | String Art                   |
| Wednesday | Netball/basketball | Cooking Club – Pretzel Wands |
| Thursday  | Football skills    | Keyrings                     |
| Friday    | Movie Night        |                              |

## **Our Approach to Homework**

At Ashton Hayes Primary School, we believe homework is most powerful when it supports children's learning in school and builds positive habits for life.

**New for this year – Strive for Five**





# *Ashton Hayes Primary School weekly newsletter*

Above all, daily reading at home is the single most important thing you can do with your child. We encourage all children and families to “**Strive for Five**” – aiming for five home reading sessions a week (these do not need to last more than 10-15 minutes (less for our youngest children – consistency is key!). Regular reading has a huge impact on every area of education, from vocabulary and writing skills to confidence in speaking and overall academic success. Please sign your child’s reading diary to let us know when they have read.

## **Fun Ideas for Reading at Home**

Reading doesn’t always have to mean sitting quietly with a book – it can be fun, interactive, and part of family life! Here are some simple ideas:

- **Shared story time** – take turns reading pages, or let your child read the pictures if they can’t yet read all of the words. Discuss what the book is about and what they think might happen next, if the book is a story.
- **Bedtime stories** – a cosy, daily routine that builds both reading skills and lovely memories.
- **Reading everywhere** – menus, signs, recipes, instructions... everyday opportunities count!
- **Bring characters to life** – try silly voices, act out parts of the story, or ask “what might happen next?”
- **Youngest children** can simply enjoy handling books, talking about pictures, or listening to rhymes and songs.

## **Reading and Phonics in Reception and Year 1**

This year, we have a renewed focus on the precision teaching of phonics to our children in the Early Years and Year 1 in particular - building on the great work of previous years. As part of this renewed focus, your child will be bringing home some new books that we have invested in this year, that are directly linked to their previous weeks phonics learning (this will start at the end of next week).

Children in Reception and Year 1 will bring home two types of books each week:

1. A **phonics book** directly linked to what they’ve been learning in class the week before. This helps embed their new knowledge and ensures they practise at the right level. They will have this book for the full week and it should be read every day at home (and school)– repetition and overlearning are key here, to help embed and secure learning.



# *Ashton Hayes Primary School weekly newsletter*

2. A **reading-for-pleasure book** chosen by your child, with some guidance from their teacher, to share and enjoy. This book will not necessarily link to their phonics learning.

Both are equally valuable – one builds skills, the other nurtures a lifelong love of reading.

## **Homework as Children Grow**

From **Year 2 onwards**, reading every day remains equally important and '**Strive for Five**' should continue all of the way to the end of Year 6. Children will also receive each week:

- **Weekly spellings** to practise key words and patterns (more details about our new approach to spelling next week!)
- **Times tables** and **related facts** to rehearse and learn at home, building fluency and confidence in maths. By the end of Year 4, children should have mastered their times tables up to 12x12! Your child's class teacher will let the children know what times tables they should be working on and if necessary, will provide activities to support this.

These key skills are crucial foundations for future learning and open the door to more advanced work in later years.

## **Additional and Online Homework**

At times, children will also receive unscheduled homework, above and above (or in place of) that outlined above and, in the timetable below, tailored to their individual needs or wider class needs - helping to reinforce areas where extra practice will be especially beneficial. If this is the case, your child's class teacher will communicate that there is additional or different homework than normal and the reason why it has been set. Much of this additional homework will also be available in an exciting format online, with further details to be shared in the coming weeks. Children will also have the option to undertake additional fun activities online linked to learning Spanish from after the October half term, when we will share further details of a new app.

**In summary:** Our approach to homework is designed to support, inspire, and extend learning.

We don't want homework to be arduous or to take up valuable family time at home – our children work incredibly hard at school and at Ashton Hayes, we believe that children also need time to switch off from school, relax and enjoy time with their family and friends.

**Please find below a summary of homework for each class:**



## ***Ashton Hayes Primary School weekly newsletter***

If you have any questions about homework, please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher.

| <b>Class</b>       | <b>Homework</b>   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Kestrel</b>     | Strive for five reading – linked to phonics learning and reading for pleasure |
| <b>Sparrowhawk</b> | Strive for five reading; phonics dependent on identified need; spellings      |
| <b>Owl</b>         | Strive for five reading; weekly spellings; times tables                       |
| <b>Peregrine</b>   | Strive for five reading; weekly spellings; times tables                       |
| <b>Buzzard</b>     | Strive for five reading; weekly spellings; times tables                       |

Next week, I will share details of our new approach to teaching spelling across the school, along with a parents guide that will help you support your child at home.

Have a great weekend!

Mr Bell

Headteacher



# Ashton Hayes Primary School weekly newsletter

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](https://nationalcollege.com).

## 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

# RECOGNISING & MANAGING STRESS

According to recent studies, over 60% of young people report feeling regularly overwhelmed – with stress impacting their learning, emotional wellbeing and social connections. If left unaddressed, stress can lead to more serious concerns such as anxiety, depression or disengagement. This guide offers ten practical, evidence-based strategies to help children and young people recognise, manage and recover from stress in healthy ways.

### 1 SPOT THE SUBTLE SIGNS

Look out for changes in mood, behaviour, or energy levels, such as irritability, withdrawal, clinginess, or frequent headaches. These may indicate that a child is feeling overwhelmed. By tuning into these cues early and offering a calm, non-judgemental space to talk, adults can help children feel heard and supported before issues escalate.

### 2 KEEP CONVERSATIONS FLOWING

Make time for open, informal check-ins – whether it's during car journeys, over dinner, or in quiet classroom moments. Let children know it's okay to talk about what's bothering them. Regular, low-pressure conversations create a safe space where emotions are validated, not dismissed.

### 3 MAKE MOVEMENT PART OF THE DAY

Physical activity can dramatically reduce stress hormones while improving mood and focus. Encourage movement through activities children genuinely enjoy – from team sports to dancing around the kitchen. Even light activity like stretching or walking the dog can help us all unwind.

### 4 SUPPORT HEALTHY SLEEP PATTERNS

Poor sleep makes stress harder to manage. Establish a calming evening routine that avoids screens before bedtime and promotes winding down, such as reading, listening to music, or chatting quietly. Good sleep hygiene helps reset mood, enhances concentration, and boosts emotional resilience.

### 5 PRACTISE MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness doesn't have to mean long periods of meditation. A few slow breaths before lessons or short family meditation sessions before bed can make a real difference. These simple habits help children ground themselves, reduce emotional reactivity, and build inner calm over time.

### 6 SET DIGITAL BOUNDARIES

Excessive screen time, especially before bed or on social media, is linked with higher stress levels. Set clear expectations for when and where devices can be used and suggest screen-free alternatives like crafts, nature walks, or board games to promote digital balance and reduce overstimulation.

### 7 NURTURE SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Strong relationships act as a buffer against stress. Whether it's a trusted adult, a sibling, or a good friend, ensure children have people around them they can talk to and spend quality time with. Help them build those bonds through shared activities and meaningful interaction.

### 8 PROGRESS OVER PERFECTION

Set realistic goals and praise effort, not just outcomes. When children feel pressured to be perfect, stress naturally follows. Celebrate small wins and help them reframe setbacks as learning opportunities. This helps build confidence and reduces the fear of failure.

### 9 TEACH EVERYDAY PROBLEM-SOLVING

Use real-life scenarios to build resilience. Encourage children to identify problems, consider possible solutions, and choose a plan of action. Practising these steps builds a sense of control and reduces the helplessness that often accompanies stress.

### 10 BE THE MODEL THEY NEED

Children notice how adults respond to challenges. Model healthy coping strategies such as taking breaks, asking for help, or calmly expressing frustration. By showing how you manage stress constructively, you help normalise these behaviours and encourage children to do the same.

## Meet Our Expert

Anna Bateman is Director of Halcyon Education Ltd, Director for Wellbeing and Family Services at Leigh Trust, and lead expert for mental health at The National College. Anna specialises in strategic mental health solutions for schools, supporting educators and families to improve resilience, emotional literacy, and overall wellbeing for children across the UK.







# ***Ashton Hayes Primary School weekly newsletter***